



U.S. Coast Guard History Program

Spike, 1966

WLIC 75308

A pointed metal shaft used for opening the lay of a twisted rope for splicing.

Builder: Dorchester Shipbuilding Corporation, Dorchester, New Jersey

Length: 76' 1"

Beam: 22' 5"

Draft: 4' 6"

Displacement: 129 tons

Cost: \$1.3 million contract for three tenders with barges

Commissioned: 13 April 1966

Decommissioned: 30 May 1986

Disposition:

Machinery: 2 Waukesha Motor Company 630 hp diesel engines; twin screws

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 10 knots; 1,000 mile range

Cruising:

Deck Gear: worked in conjunction with a push construction barge with an attached Link-Belt Speeder Model TC-77 crane

Electronics: CR-103 navigation radar

Complement: 9 (1966)

Armament: None

Tender History:

The Coast Guard construction tender *Spike* was built by the Dorchester Shipbuilding Corp., in Dorchester, New Jersey. She was commissioned under the command of CBM Lance L. Mason on 13 April 1966 and was assigned to Mayport Beach, Florida, where she tied up at Coast Guard Moorings Mayport. She replaced the tender *Smilax* which transferred to Brunswick, Georgia. The *Spike* was assigned the 84-foot Barge No. 68018, that had a Link-Belt Speeder Model TC-77 crane. Her duties included maintaining ATON in the Intracoastal Waterway from Mosquito Lagoon near Oak Hill, Florida to Mayport. An official press release announcing her planned arrival in Mayport noted:

The Coast Guard designed this tender for the construction, repair and maintenance of fixed aids to navigation. The tender pushes her barge which is the work platform and houses a crane, diesel pile driving equipment and jetting equipment. The pusher can operate with the barge or alone.

One official message in her file noted that BMCS Robert W. Moore relieved BMCM Robert F. Scarborough of command of *Spike* on 19 May 1981. A survey report dated 3 June 1985 noted that *Spike* was tied up due to numerous problems including some serious issues with the barge and crane, which at this point was a Oceanmaster CG-300 crane. The barge was rusting badly with the hull voids needing immediate repair. A hand-written note attached to the report indicated that "This is frustrating for an 'underutilized' unit tied up under the Group Commander's window with no place to spend 12K. This says we don't have time or \$'s to take care of our vessel." Apparently the repairs were too numerous or costly to complete as *Spike* was decommissioned on 30 May 1986 while under the command of BMCS L. M. Mason.

Her diesel engines were approved for removal in 1988 and were installed in the USCGC *Chippewa*. *Spike's* ultimate fate is not known.

Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

Douglas Peterson. *United States Lighthouse Service Tenders, 1840-1939*. Annapolis: Eastwind Publishing, 2000.

